

Success in Law School Mentoring Program

Mentoring Tool Kit: Best Practices for Mentees

Building a mentoring relationship requires nurturing and patience from both the Mentor and the Mentee. LCLD has compiled best practices from multiple resources, including the Center for Mentoring Excellence and former LCLD Mentors and Mentees, to help position you for mentorship success.

1 Create SMART goals

Robust learning goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART). Make sure your goals are clear to you and your Mentor, then stay focused and track your progress.

2 Maintain clear communication

Expect to drive the mentoring relationship and be prepared to ask for what you need when you need it. Your Mentor won't know what you need unless you tell them.

3 Expect a two-way learning relationship

Your Mentor may learn from your experiences just as you will learn from theirs. Take time to discover common interests besides a legal career and always assume positive intent with your Mentor.

4 Be authentic and challenge yourself

Your willingness to be vulnerable and honest is key to your growth and development. Expect your Mentor to challenge you with questions and opportunities that might take you beyond your comfort zone. If you pretend all is perfect, then your Mentor won't get to know the real you.

5 Engage and prepare for Mentor meetings

Advance preparation for mentoring sessions will save time, increase efficiency, and result in more meaningful learning. Create an agenda for each meeting with your Mentor and be fully present during your conversations. Let your Mentor know as soon as possible if you need to reschedule your meeting.

6 Be Mindful of your Mentor's time

Early in the mentorship, determine the best time and way to contact your Mentor. Always give your Mentor a few days to respond before trying to reach them through another method. Remember that your Mentor has other commitments that may prevent them from responding within a certain timeframe.

7 Remember your Mentor's role

Your Mentor's primary goal is to give you advice to help you grow on your journey to becoming an attorney. Don't expect your Mentor to get you a job at their place of work or any other organization. Ask your Mentor to help you solve problems, not solve them for you.

8 Share your successes and challenges

Mentors are there to help you navigate challenges and celebrate successes. Articulate your vision for yourself so that you and your Mentor can create strategies for your future success. Let them know if their advice helped you achieve your goals.

9 Ask for specific feedback

Your Mentor's honest and candid feedback will contribute to your self-awareness and help you reach the next level. Practice asking for specific feedback and be prepared to receive it without being defensive.

10 Track your journey and keep a journal

A journal is a great place to record insights, track your mentoring progress, and jot down questions in preparation for mentor meetings. Although keeping a journal requires discipline and practice, it's well worth the effort.

11 Put in effort and don't give up

Don't give up on the mentorship if one or more of your goals isn't met. Instead, focus on accomplishing your other goals and create new ones along the way.

12 Use external resources

Connect with the Career Services Office at your law school for additional resources. If you have questions about your mentorship, please reach out to your City Lead or Program Manager Nancy Richardson at nrichardson@lclldnet.com.

